

snout and the fore limb is contained twice and a half in the distance between axilla and groin. Snout very short, obtuse. Lower eyelid scaly. Nostril pierced between two nasals; no supranasal; fronto-nasal broader than long, broadly in contact with the rostral and with the frontal; præfrontals minute; frontal not much larger than frontoparietals, in contact with the first and second supraoculars; four supraoculars; five supraciliaries; frontoparietals distinct, larger than the interparietal; parietals forming a suture behind the interparietal; a pair of nuchals; fifth upper labial below the centre of the eye. Ear-opening minute. 22 smooth scales round the middle of the body. Median præanals scarcely enlarged. The length of the hind limb equals the distance between the anterior border of the eye and the fore limb; third and fourth toes equal. Tail long and thick. Upper surface of head and back blackish brown, with small round white spots; sides of body, belly, hind limbs, and base of tail uniform orange; a black streak on the temple and along the side of the neck; throat black; greater part of tail brown above and white beneath, spotted with black.

	mm.
Total length.....	166
Head.....	10
Width of head.....	7
Body.....	51
Fore limb.....	10
Hind limb.....	15
Tail (reproduced).....	105

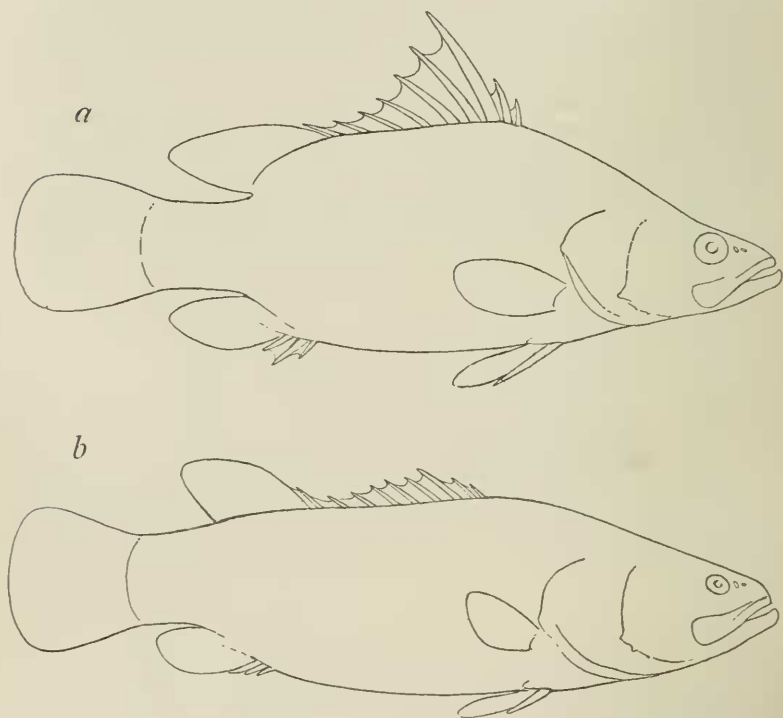
A single specimen from Mount Ruwenzori, altitude 7000 feet. Presented by the Subscribers to the Ruwenzori Expedition Fund.

LVI.—On the Variations of *Stereolepis gigas*, a great Sea-Perch from California and Japan. By G. A. BOULENGER, F.R.S.

WHEN preparing a revision of the Sea-Perches for the 'British Museum Catalogue of Fishes,' vol. i., published in 1895, a comparison of the descriptions and figures given of *Stereolepis gigas*, Ayres, from California, and *Megaperca ischinaga*, Hilgendorf, from Japan, failed to bring out any tangible difference between the two, which I accordingly proposed to unite under the former name. A comparison of

an adult Californian specimen with a photograph of Hilgendorf's types in the Berlin Museum, which I made soon after (P. Z. S. 1897, p. 917, pl. lii.), confirmed me in this opinion.

Dr. D. S. Jordan, although accepting the generic identification of the two fishes, could not be convinced of their specific identity; and in a paper which he published last year (P. U.S. Nat. Mus. xxx. p. 841, fig.), in conjunction with Mr. J. O. Snyder, he emphatically declares the Japanese fish to be "well separated from *Stereolepis gigas*, Ayres, of the coast of California, by the larger scales, and especially by



Lates niloticus, young and adult.

the form of the spinous dorsal fin, the spines in *Stereolepis gigas* being very much lower. The nominal genus *Megaperca*, however, differs but slightly from *Stereolepis*, the only tangible character resting in the marked elevation of the dorsal spines, the first dorsal being low in *Stereolepis*. The scales are a shade thicker and rougher, but the difference is

not one of importance." This latest description, accompanied by a figure, is taken from a specimen 14 inches long, although the species is known to grow to five times that length. Had Dr. Jordan not overlooked my description and figure in 1897, as he courteously informs me he inadvertently did, he could not have stated that the spinous dorsal fin is appreciably more elevated in the adult *Megaperca* than in the adult *Stereolepis* (young specimens of the latter are, I believe, still unknown). It seems hardly credible that so experienced an ichthyologist as Dr. Jordan should overlook the enormous changes in the comparative depth of the spinous dorsal which take place with age in all Bass-like fishes, and in order to emphasize this point I here give outline-figures (*a*) of a small (1 foot long) and (*b*) a large ($\frac{1}{2}$ feet long) Nile Perch (*Lates niloticus*).

I have specially selected the Nile Perch as an example, because, having been able to study a large number of specimens, I have no fear of having confounded two species.

In the young *Megaperca* the longest spines measure about half the depth of the body, in the adult (photograph of the type) exactly one fourth. I therefore cannot accept the differences in the dorsal spines as being due to anything more than the usual changes which take place with age, and until the young of the Californian fish is known we may safely assume that its first dorsal is much more elevated than in the adult. In a letter addressed to me a short time ago Dr. Jordan adds that the Japanese fish has "much larger scales." I have, I think, disposed of the supposed distinction in the dorsal fin; I will now give some facts against the second distinctive character, which, so far as I know, is the only one that would stand after a comparison of the figures given by me in 1897. In 1895 I gave the scale-formula, compiled from different sources (Japanese and American specimens), as $80-100 \frac{15}{35}$. In the Californian specimen examined by me in 1897 I counted $115 \frac{15}{40}$. In their young Japanese specimen Jordan and Snyder counted $87 \frac{14}{31}$. In two specimens from Japan (Sagami Bay), now preserved in the British Museum, and measuring 19 and 15 inches respectively, I find $90 \frac{14}{33}$ in the first, $105 \frac{16}{40}$ in the second, and my counting has been verified by my colleague Mr. Regan. These numbers seem to me to dispose entirely of the alleged difference in the size of the scales as a specific character.